



SUPPORT FOR ADULTS WITH MEMORY LOSS AND THEIR FAMILIES

CELEBRATING OVER 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

A Lifeline, Not a Luxury

"OPICA serves as an extended family for its clients...for most, its services are not a luxury but a lifeline"

Getting older has its benefits—senior discounts. You can see a movie for \$10, ride the new metro for 75 cents and take any number of classes at the local community senior center for a minimal fee. Now that you are eligible for Medicare, visits to your doctor, medical tests, preventive health care and admittance to a hospital or skilled nursing facility are covered. But if you have Alzheimer's and need supervision, there's very limited support from public entities, and private programs can be costly.

Your mom or dad has Alzheimer's and can't be left home alone. Your mom might leave the house and won't be able to find her way home. Your dad might forget to eat or how to eat or cause himself personal harm. Your husband suffers from dementia and may be confused and can't find the bathroom when needed. Your wife has hallucinations and becomes violent every afternoon. What do you do if you want them to continue to live at home and you can't leave your job? What are your choices? Medicare doesn't begin to cover the costs of what you will need.

Cost for a residential health care facility is high and paying someone \$15-\$25 an hour to look after your loved one at home would be difficult to sustain. Residential facilities covered by government funding are few and far between, have long waiting lists and vary in quality.

OPICA receives numerous calls each week asking if its services are covered by Medicare. Unfortunately the answer is no, and even with reassurance that we provide financial assistance above and beyond our already-subsidized rate of \$89/day, most inquiries end there. There was a time when the Department of Aging funded centers like OPICA, to serve adults with dementia who need close supervision, providing opportunities for socializing and cognitive stimulation and, if necessary, helping with toileting and eating. But with budget cuts and rising costs of specialized care, government funding ceased and many centers closed.

Caring for a loved one with dementia can be an exhausting responsibility. Living with the effects of a loved one's memory loss, growing difficulty in communicating and episodes of frustration and anger is painful. This experience, coupled with the increasingly close supervision and personal care that are required and the stress they create, can result in depression, grief, fatigue, feelings of entrapment, and physical health problems.

OPICA serves as an extended family for its clients, providing consistent and quality care that reassures families that they are not alone, for most, its services are not a luxury but a lifeline.

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OPICA's roots run deep. If we have omitted the name of an OPICA Board member who has passed away, please let us know so that we may include him or her in future publications.

A Message from Leadership



Dear Friends of OPICA,

"Smiles all around." That's how our OPICA staff describes what happens twice a month when children from the preschool next door come to visit. The Little Learners file in with their teachers, form a semi-circle, and begin to sing. Some are very shy; all are adorable. "Itsy Bitsy Spider" brings a torrent of applause and

then the young performers venture into the audience to shake hands. Parents hang in the background, staff hovers in doorways—and there are smiles all around.

Children and teenagers are an important part of OPICA. Young musicians from New West Charter School sing and play violin, guitar, and flute in our afternoon program. In spring and fall Notre Dame Academy sends half a dozen twelfth-graders to join in activities with our members and write about their experience. Students from other local schools earn service hours by assisting in the art and exercise programs, serving food, and helping out in the office. Recently a young Scout from Troop 23, Pacific Palisades, did his Eagle Scout Service Project at OPICA, building movable, elevated planters for day program members who like to garden.

Why is having young people at OPICA important? First of all, it enriches the experience of our members. There is nothing like having a small child hold your hand or watching school kids perform. Adults with memory loss and decreased mobility often have fewer opportunities to be around children—and so we bring children to them.



Little Learners visit OPICA

Another reason to have young people at OPICA is that they enhance the spirit of togetherness and collaboration with which we approach our mission. Children and teenagers don't simply do things for our members, they do things with them. Young visitors make art side

by side with members, have conversations, dance. The sense of shared purpose, of give-and-take, that is often missing in older adult services is very much alive at OPICA.

The engagement of OPICA members with young people also furthers our mission of education. Being with memory-impaired elders teaches the young the power of presence—of coming alongside. "When you see the smile on their face, it makes your day," says one seventh-grader. Students who join in the art program learn that memory loss doesn't impair the whole person and often frees up creativity. Sometimes members share stories with the youngsters, reminding them that every older adult has a rich history. Young people who volunteer at OPICA gain confidence and poise and take what they've learned back to the community.

As OPICA's Executive Director and Board Chair, we are proud to offer service opportunities to local students and intergenerational activities to our members. And we are grateful to you our supporters, whose generosity makes possible all the ways that OPICA brings joy to young and old alike. Thank you!

Mary Bomba *Mary Michlovich*

Mary Bomba
Board Chair

Mary Michlovich
Executive Director

Legacy Society Celebration

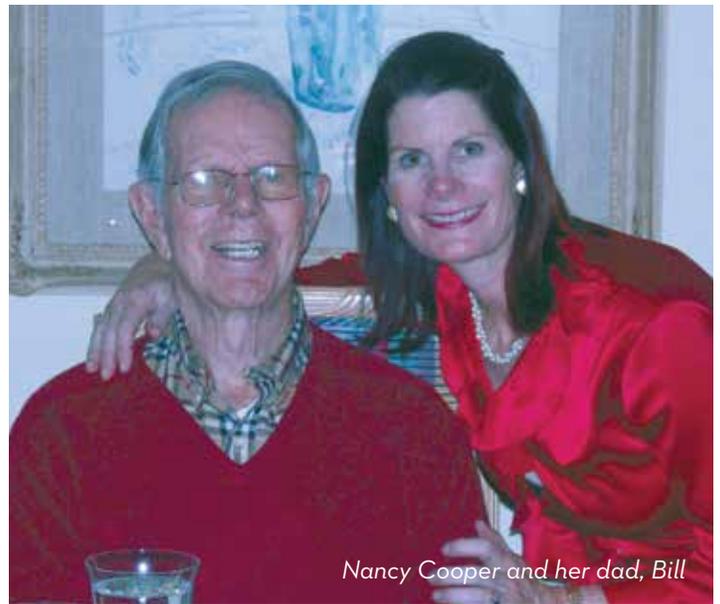
By designating OPICA as a beneficiary of your estate, your enduring legacy honors yourself and your family. There are many different ways to support OPICA, but a legacy gift will allow future generations of seniors to receive the same exceptional care provided to our members today. OPICA held its first annual luncheon on October 21 to recognize members of its newly formed Legacy Society. Guest speaker Nancy Cooper shared her father Bill's personal story, the impact the disease had on her family and the support they received during his illness from OPICA.

"The eight years Dad suffered from Alzheimer's changed all of our relationships with him – but Dad remained the sweet and joyful man he was right up until the end."

In hearing Nancy's story, we are reminded that while Alzheimer's disease strikes everyone differently, stories shared by families at OPICA have common threads: We didn't catch it right away; Mom was good at disguising it; we tried to hide it from our friends; we were emotionally and physically drained; We experienced intense guilt when we needed to place Dad in a residential facility. Expressions of fear, shame,

acceptance, and guilt—but above all—love.

Nancy's father Bill was fortunate in that his doctor at UCLA referred him to OPICA in the early stages of the disease so he could benefit from OPICA's Brain Train. Meeting once a week with others like him, coming to terms with a chronic and terminal illness, Bill enjoyed discussing current events without having to worry that he couldn't keep up with the conversation. Together with his new support group, Bill learned acceptance of, and coping skills for, Alzheimer's. A support group for Brain Train members' caregivers was offered at the same time but Nancy's mom, Ann, was hesitant to talk about her husband in public. For Ann, it was all she could do to drop Bill off in front. It was just too painful for her to see a mirror of what her husband's future held. Individual counseling helped Nancy's mom come to understand the disease, be honest with herself and feel the relief to admit how difficult it was to watch her husband's decline. Meeting with Anne Galbraith, OPICA's



Nancy Cooper and her dad, Bill

Director of Counseling, she learned to treat her husband with more understanding, affection and outward expressions of her love."

"OPICA taught my mother to overcome her fear and give family and friends access to my dad so he could share precious moments with people he loved the most."

For Nancy, "The eight years Dad suffered from Alzheimer's changed all of our relationships with him—but Dad remained the sweet and joyful man he was right up until the end. In spite of the illness, so much was gained; we came together as a family, more tolerant and understanding."

When asked why she stayed involved with OPICA after her father died, Nancy responds, "It changed the eight-year path of Alzheimer's that my father was on in such a positive way. And while I could see his decline, I loved witnessing his happiness and pride when he was at OPICA."

Nancy closed her talk with words of gratitude, "I marvel at all of you here today who have become part of OPICA's Legacy Society and thank you for the wonderful future you will help create for the many upcoming members who will benefit so deeply from all OPICA does."

A special thank-you to the following people who have named OPICA in their estate planning:

Mary and Robert Baker
Mary Bomba and Tom O'Connor
Pete England
Shila Hazan
Norma Laine

Marilyn Levin
Sue Pomerantz
Sheri Samotin
Ephraim and Joan Sales
Rita Williams



Wendy was only 63 when she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2012. She began coming to OPICA just a year after her diagnosis.

OPICA

As the first Adult Day Program and Counseling Center in Los Angeles, OPICA (Optimistic People in a Caring Atmosphere) has been serving adults challenged with memory loss and their families in the West Los Angeles area for more than 35 years. OPICA provides comprehensive programming specifically focused on all stages of memory loss in a nurturing environment. Offerings include cognitive stimulation activities, such as therapeutic art and music, brain fitness, counseling, education, and the OPICA Brain Train early memory loss program. Through on-site and select satellite programs, OPICA fills a critical need as one of the leading nonprofit community-based organizations focused solely on memory loss.

Meet Staff Member Anne Galbraith



When OPICA's then-executive director offered Anne Galbraith a position 18 years ago, she was so excited her answer was an immediate yes. As with many of OPICA's counseling staff, Anne began as a marriage family therapist (MFT), art therapy intern. Today, Anne is OPICA's longest serving staff

member and believes that her personal and professional growth has moved alongside OPICA's growth.

Back in early 2000 signs of the coming changes in the demographic of Alzheimer's disease (AD) were already clear; people were being diagnosed earlier and seeking services. OPICA was beginning to see people not only in the earlier stages but also with early onset AD. As an art therapy intern, Anne was involved in developing more personalized programs for the changing needs of OPICA members and their families. As co-creator of the Brain Train, an early stage program for individuals with AD and their caregivers, Anne and the OPICA staff continue to expand services for the community. "From the beginning OPICA has always been a place of possibilities."

As Director of Counseling for the past 12 years, Anne has been a leader in the growth of OPICA's Counseling Center.

By expanding the numbers of universities and colleges that partner with OPICA, we now have a large MFT trainee/ intern program preparing future generations of healthcare professionals. Because of our traineeship program, OPICA can offer more support groups, individualized counseling and day service programs to OPICA members and families. "Our students bring so much creativity and care to OPICA, I love watching them grow into wonderful therapists."

Anne is one of the lucky individuals who have found true passion in their professional life and can enthusiastically say, "I love what I do," when talking about work. "I found a home at OPICA. I am always learning from our members, families, staff and students. I especially love that at OPICA there is so much joy and fun."

If pressed to be more specific, Anne shares that spending time with individuals and families that face a progressive illness like AD is a privilege. "It is such a challenging and unpredictable journey; My hope for our members and families is that they can find a sense of connectedness and support, a home at OPICA. I also hope our families know that their loved ones are not just being cared for but are contributing in a meaningful way to the education and growth of our volunteers, trainees and staff."

Mindfulness-Based Art Workshop



Director of Counseling, Anne Galbraith, with OPICA interns Elizabeth Lira and Katie Durnbaugh, created a mindfulness-based art workshop for caregivers and others looking for

improved self-care. Workshops will be offered at OPICA the second Sunday of each month. Sessions are designed to foster self-care practices, respite, and enjoyment for participants. Conducted in a studio environment, workshops will start with a brief presentation on the given topic and focus on the needs of the month's specific audience. Participants will use art materials to discover the role of mindfulness practices as a pathway to reduce stress, and cultivate self-compassion and well-being.

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Lira at elizabeth@opica.org or (310) 478-0226.

OPICA is conducting focus groups to determine how we can best meet the needs of the population we serve and we would love your input.

What do you perceive are the unmet needs of adults with memory loss and their families in our community?

Please feel free share your thoughts; contact Mary Bomba at opica@opica.org.

Save the Date – June 22, 2017

OPICA's 12th Annual

Forget-Me-Not Luncheon

honoring

Elizabeth Gelfand Stearns



OPICA is privileged to honor Elizabeth Gelfand Stearns for her significant contributions to the Alzheimer's community.

A former Sr. Vice President of Strategic Marketing at Universal Pictures, Elizabeth Gelfand Stearns left her post in April, 2004, to manage The Judy Fund. As Chair, Elizabeth works to ignite public awareness and involvement in the battle against Alzheimer's disease. To date, The Judy Fund, created in memory of Elizabeth's mother, Judy Gelfand, has raised and granted close to \$7 million to support Alzheimer's research and public policy initiatives in partnership with the Alzheimer's Association. The Judy Fund is the fastest growing private fund in the history of the Alzheimer's Association. Elizabeth is a former member of the national Board of Directors of the Alzheimer's Association, a leading nonprofit organization in the battle against Alzheimer's disease.

Elizabeth is the founder of elizabeth films, llc, and Co-Producer of the Academy Award-winning film *Still Alice*, based on Lisa Genova's *New York Times*-bestselling novel, starring Julianne Moore, who plays Alice Howland, a 50-year old linguistics professor diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. *Still Alice* remains one of the most critically acclaimed films of 2014, providing a meaningful platform to engage the public around the globe in the fight to wipe out Alzheimer's disease.

Elizabeth partnered with Emmy and Peabody award-winning journalist and Executive Producer Maria Shriver, an Alzheimer's advocate and activist who has raised awareness for millions worldwide. As the Senior Director of A Woman's Nation Alzheimer's Project, Elizabeth worked with Maria to change the face of Alzheimer's disease by engaging the public.

For more information and/or sponsorship opportunities, please contact Stacey Barrett at (310) 478-0226 or stacey@opica.org.

Continued from front cover

It is said that philanthropy is needed to fill the gap between what the government can provide and what the public can afford. Generous support from its family of donors enables OPICA to be the lifeline to families faced with the emotional and physical challenges when someone has dementia. On behalf of everyone who needs and benefits from OPICA's invaluable services, thank you!

Tributes and Memorials

OPICA Tribute Cards honor, commemorate, and recognize life's most important events with a unique message of care and compassion. We express appreciation to the individuals listed below who contributed to OPICA in the form of a tribute between July 1 and December 31, 2016

IN CELEBRATION OF

Marilyn Blank's 90th Birthday

Rita Loew

Sunny Grossblatt's 90th Birthday

Rita Loew

Barbara and Tom Leanse's Anniversary

Leon Segan

Rita Loew's Birthday

Ronald and Barbara Gordon
Andrew Davis and Jennifer Loew
Alexandra Loew
Sharlyn Marsh
David and Jane Wyler

Teresa Riddle's 70th Birthday

Michael and Michelle Bennett
Gail Spear

IN HONOR OF

Mary Baker

Mary Ruth Brown
Dan and Teresa Murphy

Mary Bomba

Kathleen Bonann Marshall

Bunni Dybnis

Leah Mendelsohn

Pete England

Dan McGurk

Teresa Riddle

Alice Parrish

Ken Rosenfeld

Kathy Rosenfeld

Joyce Leanse

Jim and Rachel Trattner

The Michlovich Girls

Barbara Hament and Sheila Moore

Thelma Neworth

Dave and Brenda Winter

OPICA Staff

Joan Dunsmuir

OPICA Staff

Mallory Sobel

Bill Phillips

Ron and Teresa Riddle

Robert Sweezy

Marilyn Levin

Rita Williams

Michael and Michelle O'Brien

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Trudi Bomba

Kathleen Bonann Marshall

Ena Fisher

Jenny E. Fisher

Richard Gibbs

Shirley Kleiman

Richard and Middie Giesberg

Joseph Friedman

Aaron Goldberg

Marlene Rotblatt

Jack Goldfarb

Susan Hart

Marion Gottlieb

Michael and Betty Buxbaum

Earl Greinetz

Mary Bomba
Barbara Weinstock

Fred Hayman

Stacey Barrett

Jay Hoffstein

Julie Nichols
Bobbi Provenzano

Bert Korda

Sarah P. Korda

Paul Krentzman

Shirley Kleiman

Leslie Martinson

R & C Ellner
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Jean Lipman-Blumen
Lucille Polachek
Lee Ramer
Joanne T. Schneider
Richard and Sandra Silverman
Nancy Sinatra
Marianne P. Weil
Barbara Weinstock

Lillian Maybloom

Iris Maybloom

Rose Ann Moore

Joan Linden and Steve Schneider

Bob Patterson

Lovee Arum
Ron Evans
Esther Shapiro

Wallace D. Peterson

Susan Peterson

Daniel Ryan

Shirley Kleiman

Laurie Saltsman

Jeffrey Saltsman

Bill Shavelson

John Weingarten
and Cyrille Schiff-Weingarten

Arnold Stone

Teresa Clark

Norman Wechter

Michael and Betty Buxbaum





OPICA Adult Day Program and Counseling Center

11759 Missouri Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90025

(310) 478-0226
www.opica.org

Adult Day Program Hours:

9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Monday–Friday

Counseling Center Hours:

8:30 a.m.–7:00 p.m.
Monday–Friday

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Opening Soon

A New OPICA Brain Train group at the Stoner Park location

Specifically designed to support early-stage memory loss, OPICA's Brain train is a weekly four-hour program delivered by a multidisciplinary and professional team. The program offers healthy ways to cope with the challenges and changes associated with memory loss and provides opportunities for friendship. The support given focuses on three main areas:

Emotional wellness: Through our support groups, yoga and art therapy, members are given support that reduces stress and enhances their

emotional well-being, social connections and creativity.

Cognitive stimulation: Members participate in a variety of activities and discussions that include current events, word games, poetry, memory strategies and other cognitively stimulating activities.

CAREgiver support: a group for family CAREgivers offered concurrently provides peer-to-peer support, a greater understanding of dementia and specific care management strategies.



The new OPICA Brain Train group will meet on Wednesdays. For more information, please contact Gillian Scott at (310) 478-0226 or gillian@opica.org